

1.0 Introduction

After the record-breaking wildfire season of 2000, Congress approved funds for federal and state agencies and local communities to develop and implement a national strategy for preventing the loss of life and negative impacts to natural resources, private property and livelihoods. The result of that planning and preparation is commonly known as the “National Fire Plan” (NFP) (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2002). This plan was approved in September 2000 and is fully titled *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*. The NFP includes five key points: firefighting preparedness, rehabilitation and restoration of burned areas, reduction of hazardous fuels, community assistance, and accountability. In 2001, Congress released another directive requiring the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to engage Governors in the development of a National ten-year comprehensive strategy that would implement the NFP. For this effort, the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* (Kempthorne et al. 2002) was developed. It was approved in May 2002 and involved cooperation and collaboration of the Secretary of Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Governors of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon, and the Director of the Council on Environmental Quality. The primary goals of the Idaho Plan are to improve prevention and suppression of wildfire, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and promote community assistance.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the mitigation plan presented in this report is to identify and mitigate wildfire risks and negative consequences in communities and Wildland Urban Interface areas of Cassia County, Idaho, in accordance with the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan*. The Wildland Urban Interface is defined as the residential and supporting commercial land uses intermingled with range commercial uses and wildlands.

Cassia County proposes to reduce the hazard of wildland fire within seven fire protection districts and three open (unprotected) areas (Figure 1). The benefit of the reduction of fuels, public education, and training the community on fire protection and prevention is a reduction in frequency of wildfires spreading from city or private property on to public lands and a reduction in wildfires spreading from public lands to municipal and private property.

2.0 General Description of Assessment Area

Cassia County is predominately made up of rural areas, although the northern part of the county around the County seat of Burley has experienced major development. Development in the County has mostly occurred along Highway 30, the Eastern Idaho Railroad (EIRR), the Snake River, and Interstate Highway 84. The primary industrial complex has developed along the EIRR from the Twin Falls County line and Declo west and east of Burley and south to 1000 South where the railroad presently ends. Most of the industries are related to